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NON EST MENDACIUM SED MYSTERIUM

(From St Augustine's 'Contra Mendacium' 24.)

***I**T is not a lie but a mystery.' This rather mischievous bon mot of St Augustine's on Jacob's deceitful behaviour (Gen. xxvii) has offended generations of upright clerics. One American bishop at the Vatican Council moved to have the lesson in which it occurs (second Sunday in Lent) cut out of the breviary. We feel that a translation of this passage will make a good introduction to a number on Truth, because it provides a suitable antidote to the somewhat pinchbeck and pedantic view of truth that generally prevails nowadays. Truth is not synonymous with accuracy, or precision, or the bald statement of facts. Fiction, make-believe, poetry, flights of fancy, the tall story (technically known as hyperbole), all can contribute to that adequate grasp of reality by the mind which is what St Thomas says truth is. Truth is mysterious, and can ultimately be only known in mystery, which calls forth strange symbolic forms of expression. It is the mark of a narrow mind to reject the mysterious as simply mendacious.*

What Jacob did at his mother's instigation, his apparent deception of his father (Gen. xxvii), if considered carefully and in faith, is not a lie but a mystery or mime. If we do call it a lie, then all parables and figurative ways of expressing things, which are not to be taken literally and in which one thing stands for another, they will all have to be called lies—and that would be quite ridiculous. People who think this a lie will be able to make the same charge against any metaphorical figure of speech. When we talk about waving cornfields, jewelled vines, the flower of youth, the hoar of eld, because in fact waves, jewels, flowers and hoar-frost are not found in these cases, to which the words have been applied from other contexts, sticklers will dismiss it all as lies. Talking about Christ as the rock (I Cor. x, 4), or about the stony hearts of the Jews (Ezech. xxxvi, 26); calling Christ a lion (Apoc. v, 5) or the devil a lion (I Peter v, 8); these and countless other such expressions will be dubbed lies. And what about that figure of speech which is called antiphrasis, which consists of saying the opposite to what is intended, so that 'you have had it' means that you have not and never will have whatever it is; and a thing is called sweet because it is sour; and the Fates are called the Kindly

Ones because they are so ruthless? An instance of this in Scripture is what the devil said to the Lord about holy Job; 'See if he does not bless you to your face' (Job ii, 5), when what he meant is 'curse you'.

All these manners of speaking will be considered lies, if any figurative utterance is accounted a lie. But if it is not a lie when for the better understanding of truth one thing is used to signify another, then what Jacob did or said to his father in order to get the blessing should not be accounted a lie; nor for that matter should what Joseph said to his brothers to keep them on tenter-hooks (Gen. xlii), nor David's pretence of madness (I Kings (Sam.) xxi, 13), nor other such cases; they should be regarded instead as prophetic utterances and actions to be applied to the understanding of certain truths which they signify. These truths are covered up in figurative wrappings in order to exercise the perspicacity of the devout seeker; or else, if they were always obvious and ready to hand, they might come to be regarded as of little value. But the point to make is that it is truth, not falsehood, which is being stated in such cases, because it is truth, not falsehood, that is ultimately being signified whether by word or deed; and it is of course what is signified that is being stated. People think these things are lies, because they do not understand that it is the truth which is ultimately signified that is being stated; they believe that what is being stated is something apparently false.

To make it plainer by an example, look at what Jacob did. He undoubtedly covered his limbs with goat skins; if we look for the immediate cause of his action, we will consider that he was lying, because he did it in order to be taken for someone else. But if we refer this deed to its meaning, to what it was intended to signify, then the goat skins mean sins, and he who covered himself with them means one who bore not his own but other people's sins, Christ. So the true meaning of the deed can in no way be called a lie.

And as in what he did, so in what he said. When his father asked him: 'Who are you, my son?', he answered: 'I am Esau, your first-born'. If this is simply referred to those two twins, it will look like a lie; but if it is referred to the meaning which these words and deeds were all written down to signify, then *he* is to be understood, in his body the Church, who was to say when

speaking on this subject, 'When you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, while you are driven outside; and they shall come from east and west and north and south and sit down in the kingdom of God; and behold *they are last who were first and first who were last*' (Luke xiii, 28). It is in this way that the younger brother has taken away the first place from the elder brother and transferred it to himself. Well then, since such great truths are being signified, and so truly, can anything said or done in this story be fairly considered a lie?



TRUTH IN THE GOSPEL OF ST JOHN

JORDAN VINK, O.P.

TO the people St John addresses, the question 'What is truth?' (xviii, 38) was not simply a matter of intellectual curiosity or scepticism. The gospel offers an answer to the deepest needs of a sophisticated society, in search of 'life', 'light' and 'truth'. Although we are pressed by questions of a similar kind, yet John's answers are not immediately understandable to us. The problem what the meaning is of the concept 'truth' in the fourth gospel is best approached along three separate ways: in what contexts does it appear in the gospel, what were the connotations attached to it in the contemporary world, and how far is all this relevant to us?

As for the first point, it is most helpful to return to the context of Pilate's question; because the account of our Lord's trial before the Roman procurator has a far greater importance in the evangelist's mind than just that of a chronicle of certain juridical facts. He gives such prominence to the scene because he is depicting at the same time the trial of Christianity by the secular authorities. The whole scene has to be read in the light of the Johannine 'irony'. Whereas at face-value it is Pilate who judges, the believing reader of the gospel knows that in point of fact it is the Lord who is King and Judge. 'I am king. For this I was born and came into this world, to give testimony to the truth.' This solemn royal declaration brings us into the heart of this gospel and into its favourite themes. Its dramatic message is that now already,

during his earthly mission, Jesus' function as eschatological¹ judge is being fulfilled. The separations the final judgment will make are being drawn across mankind by the very coming of the Light which reveals the inner motives of man's deeds (iii, 18-21).² However, this judging function of Jesus is but the dark counterpart of his saving work: 'He who is of the truth hears my voice' (xviii 37), and it is his Father's love which sent him into this world (iii, 16). The truth to which our Lord gives witness as judge is therefore the revelation of God's love in Jesus which requires the final decisions in man's life.

Is however this witnessing to the truth not going to be discontinued by Jesus' death? Is darkness going to overcome the light after all? If Jesus' cause is left to the disciples it is in feeble hands. No more than in the other gospels is their lack of understanding veiled or excused by St John (xvi, 12). This is one of the main themes of our Lord's farewell discourses, and at the same time a new 'dimension' is added to the concept of 'truth'. There is no break in the work of Jesus: both aspects of it, saving and judging, will be continued by the Spirit he will send to them. This Spirit is himself the Spirit of truth (xvi, 17), who will lead them into the whole truth (xv, 26; xvi, 13). Both descriptions correspond even in detail: Jesus is the way, the truth and the life, that is, according to the context, the way leading to truth and life (xiv, 6), and also the Spirit 'leads them along the way to the truth' (xvi, 13) as the Greek expression has it. The Spirit will also judge and convince the world of sin and of justice and of judgment (xvi, 8). Although this judgment comes also through the Church (xv, 26-27) it cannot be said to be a *human* judgment. Only in so far as Christ's disciples can be said to be born again, to live through divine force, can they be said to be in touch with the Spirit, who upholds to the world the norms of justice. They can be sure that their judgment, being 'pneumatic', will be much more of a plea in favour, a vital appeal to sanctity rather than a damning accusation. Although a superficial approach to this gospel might convey a black-and-white picture of mankind, its

¹ Eschatological—concerning the last things; the eschatological judge is the judge at the last judgment.

² That the expression refers to judgment is now confirmed by the first extra-biblical parallel: in the *Manual of Discipline* of the Community of Qumrân (1Q S 8, 6). There however the final judgment belongs to the future, whereas in St John 'now' is the judgment of this world' (xii, 31).

basic message is in accordance with the other gospels, where it is emphasized that no man can claim a right to judgment about his fellow-men. (Matt. vii, 1 etc.)

It is not to be wondered at that for such an exacting mission Jesus prays the Father to sanctify his disciples, to set them apart, to consecrate them, as Jeremiah was sanctified (Jer. i, 5). 'Sanctify them in the truth' (xvii, 17). Since their message has the same double aspect as Jesus' preaching, and since the message 'the truth will make you free' (viii, 32) will meet with refusal and hostility again, they must be prepared to consecrate themselves also as victims, following their Lord's example (xvii, 19).

But it is not only in regard to our Lord and the disciples that the concept of 'truth' appears in crucial contexts of the gospel. Also the believers, those who will believe through the apostles' words (xvii, 20), are related to this heavenly truth. The word expresses both their new being, their rebirth from 'above' (iii, 3), and the moral effort this new life asks of them. For it is only those who *are* of the truth that hear Jesus' voice (xviii, 37). *We* are of the truth, as we are born of God (i, 13). But the result of that new birth is that we 'do the truth', as John's Semitic expression has it (iii, 21). Nothing could show more clearly that 'truth' claims the whole personality and is anything but a mere philosophical notion.³ Also their worship is comprised in the same truth: the true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth (iv, 23). Their worship is an act of their new God-given life and needs no longer to have recourse to foreshadowing figures. To all believers Christ can be said to be *the* Truth (xiv, 6). As is clear from the context, this saying is not meant to express any philosophical definition of Jesus' nature. He is the only way *leading to* the Father where life and truth is found.⁴ The many texts about 'truth' to which this last one forms in a sense the crown, cover all aspects of the revelation made in Christ. Truth is the message which the Son heard from the Father in both its aspects: saving and judging; it gives the very name to the Spirit who continues his task, it sanctifies the apostles to be preachers of God's Word — 'Thy word is truth' (xvii, 17)—it describes the rebirth, the new life and worship of Christ's flock.

3 It is clear however that Bultmann's description of this aspect (Kittel. *Theol. Wört.z.N.T.* B.P, p. 246), detaching it apparently from any doctrinal context (*mysteriöse oder rationale Belehrung*), is preconditioned by his opinions on faith and revelation.

4. cf. J. Dupont: *Essais sur la Christologie de S. Jean*. Bruges 1951, p. 214.

After this broad outline of the concept of 'truth' in this gospel, the question becomes more pressing; why did the evangelist choose exactly this term to express such important thoughts? As part of the general background of the gospel the question is subject to the most lively discussion. In the interpretation of the other gospels something is reached among the scholars which can cautiously be called a lesser degree of disagreement than that which still surrounds the most general questions about the fourth gospel: purpose, destination, authorship. As for the concept of 'truth', an eminent paper was presented to the International Congress on the Four Gospels in Oxford in 1957.⁵ I. de la Potterie first outlined the opinions current on this topic. The idea of truth seems to be a reflection of gnostic dualistic concepts (Bultmann), or of platonic ideas of reality and its revelation (Dodd). He then points out how all the literary evidence available points in another direction, viz. the late Jewish tradition formed by sapiential and apocalyptic literature. In the books of Wisdom 'truth' is the revelation of God's providential plans for the salvation of mankind. In the apocalyptic writings we find both the moral sense of 'truth' and 'truth' as the revelation of God committed to a privileged messenger. The Johannine terms 'to do the truth', 'witness to the truth', 'Spirit of truth' find their natural place in this tradition. The word is listened to, it is the Father's Word. 'I have told you the truth which I heard from God' (viii, 40). As de la Potterie rightly points out, truth in St John is *heard* from the Father, *spoken* by Christ, *heard* by the believers, whereas the hellenistic notion of divine reality would rather have suggested the use of the terms 'seeing' and 'vision',⁶ if it actually had formed the background of the Johannine usage.

If however the Johannine vocabulary is so largely determined by biblical and extra-biblical Jewish writers, the question cannot be avoided to what audience he addresses his gospel.⁷ It is almost a dogma among commentators that 'the Jews' in the fourth gospel belong to the past, are a lost entity and outside the scope of the

⁵ I. de la Potterie: *L'arrière-fond du thème johannique de vérité*. In: *Studia Evangelica* . . . Int. Congr. . . . ed. Aland, Cross e.a. Berlin 1959, p. 277-294.

⁶ cf. however iii, 11; viii, 38; v, 19; iii, 32.

⁷ This question predetermines the one of vocabulary, e.g. in Dodd: *The Fourth Gospel*, Cambridge 1956, p. 176: This sense can hardly be supposed to come through to Greek readers of the words *kharis kai aletheia* (grace and truth). . . . Thus, while the mould of the expression is determined by Hebrew usage, the actual sense of the words must be determined by Greek usage. Cf. also p. 174.

gospel. Their very name is already a symbol for anyone who refuses to accept Christ.

In a brilliant study J. A. T. Robinson recently challenged this assumption.⁸ He maintains that the gospel addresses the Greek-speaking Jews of the dispersion. 'The Jews said to one another: Does he intend to go to the dispersion among the Greek-speaking (Jews) and teach the Greek-speaking (Jews)?' (vii, 35). A question which John—'ironically'—wants to be answered affirmatively by his readers. The gospel is in fact a passionate attempt to prevent a repetition of the dramatic refusal of Christ by the Judean Jews, and pleads to the Jewish brethren in the *diaspora* that they at least may accept the fulfilment of Jewish destiny. In this hypothesis John i, 17, gets an almost dramatic impact: 'The law was given through Moses but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ'.

This brings us to the third and final point of this note, viz. the relevance of John's 'truth'-sayings to our own situation. The polemical tone of many passages (e.g. viii, 39-59) might be misleading. If Robinson is right, these debates with Palestinian Jews do not reflect the real purpose of the work, which is to win for Christ the remaining parts of Jewry. If therefore both in the Qumrân-writings and in St John the term 'Spirit of truth' occurs, the meaning is basically different. The Spirit of truth does not seclude Christians from their fellow men and fellow Jews, whereas on the contrary in the barren wilderness of Qumrân lived those who had saved themselves from the Sons of Darkness. John's gospel is a moving plea to the sheep of the same fold, and he wants his readers to adopt the same attitude both to the Jews and to our fellow men in general. Nowhere in the gospel does the expression occur: 'those who *have* the truth' or 'who *possess* the truth', and neither is it a set of norms by means of which one would be able to draw lines of division across mankind. Truth is both more heavenly and more merciful. Since it is the innermost motives of men's deeds which are revealed by the Light, the lines across mankind of which we spoke above may well defy the standard norms of human wisdom. The disciples are therefore said to be *led* to the truth themselves along the only way, Christ. If it is said that the Father *seeks* such to worship him in Spirit and

⁸ J. A. T. Robinson: *Destination and Purpose of St John's Gospel*. New Test. Studies 6, 1960, 117-131.

truth (iv, 23), this does not mean that those worshippers have come to do so by their own efforts. That the Father *seeks*, means that he brings it about, as he *seeks* Christ's glory (viii, 50). Is this truth not close to the notion of the kingdom of God of the other gospels, the kingdom of sanctifying and liberating love?



SHAMING THE DEVIL: OR TELLING THE TRUTH

THOMAS GILBY, O.P.

OF truthfulness it is much less than courage of heart and holiness'—this adaptation of Belloc might be prompted by some hack moralists of the day before yesterday, who instead of riding the downs with God's first gift to man, *subtle, eloquent, sure, sweet, more beautiful than the sun, whose company is without tediousness but with gladness*,¹ land us in a bog of mental restrictions and verbal circumlocutions. True, they carry some sort of apparatus for extricating us, but their effect is one of casuistry rather than candour, and they irked Newman who was formed by another tradition: it was ironical that he, who in all conscience had a delicate sense of honour, should have been exposed to Kingsley's bluff. Not that Anglo-Saxons anyhow have cause for complaint against the slippery Latins, for they themselves, though they may not go in for *suggestio falsi*—the half-lie—are adept at *suppressio veri*—the half-truth—and of all nations the frankness on which they pride themselves seems most baffling to others. In any case truthfulness is not just a matter of bluntness, for though it will have nothing to do with white lies, it does call for tact and a cultivated spirit of fair play.

Let us look at how it is described in the *Summa Theologiae*. For somebody so charged with obedience to the truth of God and things, it may come as a surprise that St Thomas tucks veracity in between two of the satellites to the cardinal virtue of justice, namely between punitive justice and friendliness which govern its severe and agreeable functions respectively,² a suitable position between the bleak and the bland—but surely rather a minor one? Is St Thomas perhaps like us, most off hand sometimes about what

¹ cf. Wisdom vi-xi.

² 2a-2ae. cix-ciii.

is most pervasive and intimate? Many of us know how hard it is to answer in terms of a special subject such inquiries as, 'Tell me, what do you consider most important in life?'—or, 'what you think about things in general?'—or even, 'all about yourself'.

Perhaps, but that is not the reason for the modesty of the treatise. St Thomas makes it clear from the beginning that he is not directly dealing here with the final truth immediately possessed in vision which is our eternal happiness, nor with the cleaving to it in darkness which is the act of faith, nor yet with the conformity of our judgment with the world as it really is. All this is discussed elsewhere. He is not even dealing with that integrity of mind which will not let us put up a smoke-screen between ourselves and God. If we have done wrong let us be heartily sorry, or at least not defend ourselves; if we are going to do wrong let us not blink the fact, or persuade ourselves that the law is not there or is other than it is. There is a split-second ignorance before most sins, but when it settles on us like a habit so that our very conscience becomes erroneous, then we are in danger of being at fault whatever we do—*quod est inconveniens*, the *Summa* drily notes; in other words, an awkward state of affairs, worse than a thumping whopper, for it is a sickness of which the germs breed like those of the common cold.

To utter truth on this scale is the object or end of all virtue. But room remains for a more specialized and less ranging habit, of manifesting to our fellows what we have in our minds, of using aright the signs whereby we communicate with one another, of going past scientific or doctrinal truth, which is impersonal, to moral truth, which is interpersonal. As concerned with what is due to others, truthfulness is directly the affair of justice and equity, though it differs from ordinary justice in that it does not render a *legal obligation* which can be measured by set rules and strictly enforced (2a-2ae. cix, 3). This point can be misunderstood; it does not imply that the authorities cannot proceed against false declarations in contracts or damaging lies, nor that we are entitled to twist words as we choose, like Humpty Dumpty in *Through the Looking Glass*,³ nor that telling the truth is of lesser obligation

3 'When I use a word', Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less . . . Impenetrability! That's what I say!'

than paying your debts, nor, still less, that it is merely a counsel. It simply means that the *strict moral obligation* of truthfulness, like that of loving your neighbour or behaving with fortitude or temperance, cannot be framed by legislation. Its decency is too personal for typification, too supple for fixation. Human laws, be it remembered, touch our outward patterns of behaviour, not our inner spring and the virtuous way of doing things (1a-2ae. xcvi, 2, 3).

We have to know where we stand with one another, for otherwise life in common would become intolerable. Untruthfulness, then, always contains the element of unfairness, actual or potential, to somebody else. All sins can be antisocial, though many are committed in solitariness. But you cannot exercise the special virtue of truthfulness without a listener—not necessarily attentive; you cannot lie making a speech meant to be a soliloquy. The intention to deceive, however, is not the stuff of a lie, but rather the high polish; it does not constitute its essence, but rather its achievement (2a-2ae. cx, 1). St Thomas here uses the term *perfection*, not in any commendatory sense; thus we refer to a perfect murder meaning one that leaves no suspicion behind it, or a perfect gentlemen meaning one who never unintentionally offends against good manners. Not all scholastic moralists have agreed with him, but we need not linger over the controversy except to recollect that Ananias and Sapphira were punished not for any harm they did, and to note that truthfulness has a loveliness apart from the benefits that follow. Let us pick out some of its qualities.

By temperament, or at least by training, many of us find more reassurance of virtue by doing what is irksome than by doing what is congenial. This does not agree in theory with St Thomas's teaching about the delightfulness of virtue, the healthiness of pleasure, and the fact that actions are not good just because they are painful. Certainly there is a special merit in tackling opposition, and it is the mark of the cardinal virtue of fortitude. In general, however, going against the grain does not increase the voluntariness of what we do and therefore does not enhance its excellence (cf. 2a-2ae. lxxxii, 4): St Thomas means, of course, our inner grain rather than the texture of our surface emotions when he speaks of delighting in the good, for not yet 'does our flesh rejoice in the living God' (Ps. lxxxiii, 3). Nevertheless

the object of virtue is such because it is good, not because it is difficult, and if we enjoy it, well then, so much the better.

So with truthfulness. Many of us like easy-going ways, and have to nerve ourselves to speak harshly. All the same we should not fancy that our truthfulness should be reserved for unpleasant encounters. Speaking our mind does not necessarily mean showing the rough edge of our tongue. Bluntness can be only too blunt, candour only too devastating. Truthfulness should go with a smile as well as a frown, and we might well inquire how often it works for the encouragement of others, not merely for their correction. Perhaps this is one of those few occasions where the moralist in us can learn from a maxim of the canonists: 'enlarge the favourable, confine the burdensome'. For truthfulness is positive and constructive, for the building up of the Church, which is the body of Christ. So 'speaking the truth in love we may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ' (Ephes. iv, 15).

Truthfulness is no more the mere absence of deceit than sanctifying grace itself is the mere absence of mortal sin. Evil should not be allowed to get away with the trick of looking shaggy and high-spirited, one result of grooming good to look too even and sedate. Safety is not too safe a word in the light of the condemnation of *Tutiorismus Absolutus* (Safety First at All Costs) by Alexander VIII towards the end of the seventeenth-century debates about conscience—but that is another question and deserves a separate article. The more real the more good, the less real the more evil—that is, in effect, the refrain which runs throughout St Thomas's moral theology. An unadventurous negativeness is a main menace to the life of the spirit, for though our sins of commission may rise up against us, look closely and we shall see that it is our sins of omission that should give us a sinking feeling. By and large we should recognize that we probably fail God's friendship more by what we don't do than by what we do do.

Next, as truthfulness is not a sour-faced or angular virtue, neither does it put its foot in it every time it opens its mouth. Blurting out is not its role, for it calls for consideration and discretion, delicacy and reserve, indeed all the component parts of the cardinal virtue of prudence which governs it (2a-2ae. xlix). A sense of social context is essential, otherwise we may become

exhibitionists or conversational bullies. The cult of 'absolute honesty' can be a self-centred luxury, and its effects can be very unfair. That man is vicious, St Thomas remarks, who publicizes either his good qualities or his faults out of season and out of place (2a-2ae. cix, 1 ad 2). I am not a truthful person because I blab to any chance inquirer, or because I betray confidence, or because I confess to a merely emotional not liking of someone, when my hearer—and repeater—will misunderstand me to mean that I harbour a deliberate disliking, or because I throw pearls before swine. It takes two to be truthful, for truthfulness is a part of justice, and may start as a monologue yet must reckon on what sort of dialogue is likely to follow.

Finally, like all the moral virtues, it holds to a mean between excess and deficiency, and, as with justice, this mean stands between too much or too little with respect to the outward word or deed. If anything, it is more offended by overstatement than by understatement. Aristotle notices that he who claims more than he has out of boastfulness is a futile sort of fellow, though an uglier character if he does so for gain, whereas he who disclaims qualities in order to avoid parade is less unattractive, unless he indulges in the mock-modesty of the humbug. St Thomas confirms him; people who exaggerate themselves are bores, while those who depreciate themselves at least exhibit social good sense, though they may be just as inaccurate (2a-2ae. cix, 4). He draws a distinction between a man who denies his gifts and another who without prejudice to truth does not affirm them. This last he finds admirable, citing St Paul, 'For though I should have a mind to glory, I would not be foolish, for I would say the truth. Yet now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth in me or heareth of me' (II Cor. xii, 6).

At once the dove and the serpent, truthfulness has a simplicity set against double-think, double-talk, double-dealing, and an elasticity that responds to the variety of its occasions, being closer to the equity of justice than to its legal grammar; its genius is analogical rather than univocal. Sometimes speaking in silences, sometimes showing the shimmer of contrasting half-truths recognized as such, sometimes downright, sometimes turning to parables, it knits the society of person with person, that whole body, of which St Paul speaks, 'compacted and fitly joined together, by what every joint supplieth, according to the opera-

tion in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in charity' (Ephes. iv, 16). According to the measure of every part; for as there is a gradation in charity, so the tones of truthfulness differ for the near, the dear, the distant, the weak, the strong, the young, the old, though always there should be 'rational milk without guile, that thereby you may grow unto salvation' (I Peter ii, 1).

The eternal principle of this conversation is truly in heaven, in the Father who by declining himself begets the Word: *Verbum spirans Amorem*, the Word breathing forth Love. Thence proceeds the Spirit, the *Donum*, the Gift we receive and share with others, for the kingdom of heaven is already among us. Love cannot live with pretences, however kindly meant; charity rejoiceth in the truth (I Cor. xiii, 6). Neither ostentatious nor secretive, neither thrusting nor evasive, says St Thomas, each should deal with his neighbour with open mind and open heart according to circumstance. So St John would have us avoid lies less because they debase the currency of human transactions than because they belong to the Devil, 'who is the father of lies' (John viii, 4). So St Paul looks beyond reasons of civic decency; 'speak ye the truth because you are members of one another' (Ephes. iv, 25). So St Thomas observes that every truth, whatever and by whoever uttered, is from the Holy Ghost, and St Catherine bids us remember that whenever we think and speak we should reflect some likeness of the Word.



RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AND INTOLERANCE¹

CARDINAL LERCARO

THE Concept of *Tolerance*. There is about tolerance something paradoxical, for it consists, in fact, in permitting something which we know with certainty to be either an evil or an error: *permissio negativa mali*, as the theologian carefully defines it. Negative, because the permission does not imply either encouragement or approval.

¹ A French version of this conference by the Cardinal Archbishop of Bologna appeared in *La Documentation Catholique*, March 1959, and this translation of it by G. F. Pullen is here printed by kind permission of the editor.

From this definition it follows that tolerance is not, in the strict sense of the word, a virtue. We ought rather to say that the exercise of tolerance is authorized and required by a virtue, on account of some greater good which must be promoted or defended. The ultimate justification for tolerance has to be sought in the reflection of the divine laws governing the world, which human rulers are required to achieve. 'Human government', says St Thomas, 'is derived from the divine government, and must imitate it. But God, although he is almighty and supremely good, permits the appearance in the universe of certain evils which he could prevent, to the end that the suppression of these evils should not at the same time involve the suppression of a still greater good, or the creation of still greater evils. We see, then, that in human government also, those who govern as they should, tolerate certain evils, so as not to hinder certain goods, or even so as to prevent greater evils still' (*S. Theol.* IIa. IIae. 10, xi, c).

This thought has been taken up with vigour by the popes of modern times, notably by Leo XIII in his encyclical *Libertas*, and by Pius XII on many occasions. The latter, in one of his allocutions,² made a statement which will be found to contain, in one brief passage, a great part of Catholic teaching on the tolerance of evil. He said: 'The statement that religious and moral error must always be prevented if possible, because toleration of such error is itself immoral, cannot be valid in any absolute and unconditional sense. Moreover, God has not given, even to human authority, any such absolute and universal precept in matters of faith and morals. Nothing of the kind is found in the ordinary and common convictions of men, nor in the Christian conscience, nor in the sources of revelation, nor in the practice of the Church. Apart from other scriptural texts which could be adduced in support of this argument, Christ gives, in the parable of the cockle, the following advice: "Let the cockle grow in the field of the world together with the good seed until the harvest" (Matt. xiii, 24-30). The duty of suppressing moral and religious deviations cannot therefore be an ultimate rule of conduct, but must be subordinated to other rules which are more lofty and of more general application. These may, in certain cases, permit—and they may even recommend as the better course—the non-prevention of error, so as to promote a greater good.'

2 Pius XII. Allocution to Italian Catholic Jurists, 6th December 1953.

Now, what is that greater good which justifies, and may even require, the tolerance by Catholics of other religious denominations?

The virtue which in general justifies tolerance is prudence, in so far as this virtue discerns with precision, and according to justice, what ought to be done in a particular case. Is prudence, then, no more than a kind of practical *clairvoyance*, or is it governed by higher principles—by a respect for truth, or even by a respect for the activity of God in souls?

'Respect for truth', we say, and 'respect for the human mode of adhering to it', rather than 'respect for liberty'. Here it is possible to note the distinction between the Catholic concept of tolerance, and the liberal view as formulated by John Locke in his *Letter concerning Toleration* (1689). The elements essential to establish the distinction are firmly laid down by Pius XI in his encyclical, *Non abbiamo bisogno*, where he says: 'We recently said that we were happy and proud to fight the good fight for the liberty of consciences, and not . . . for liberty of conscience. The latter is an equivocal expression which has frequently been abused, being made to signify an absolute independence of the individual conscience, a thing which would be an absurdity in a soul created and redeemed by God.'

The Catholic Position as Seen by Non-Catholics. Before we expound the Catholic position, we must examine the view non-Catholics have formed about what the Catholic position is, under the guidance of the secular press.

The non-Catholic attitude to tolerance is subjective, and it affirms the human, rather than the theological, value of truth. This opinion is met with in a sense which I shall call 'dogmatic' (the 'religion of liberty', a modern form of religiosity); or in the sceptical sense, of a decadent historicism. Thus, Renan thought to personify the essential attitude of tolerance by putting forth the opinion that all views of the world and its meaning were, at bottom, equally false. In the same way, a certain philosophical relativism current in our own day claims to admit every position—except that very one which offers itself as absolute truth.

For this reason, secular culture is only able to define the Catholic attitude in terms which were attributed by his opponents to the Catholic controversialist, Louis Veuillot: 'When we are in a minority, we claim liberty for ourselves in the name of your

principles; when we are in the majority, we refuse you liberty in the name of our own' (a remark of which in fact he was quite innocent).

It must be borne in mind that the thesis, according to which intolerance is necessarily linked with any assertion of religious transcendence, is an essential element in the secular historical argument. It is common to every secular position, even the most moderate. It appears to be a consequence of that historical judgment which asserts that by the end of the middle ages the Church had exhausted her positive historic mission and her civilizing powers; that she no longer provides any kind of spiritual stimulus for the development of civil life; that she is now only concerned with self-preservation, meeting the modern world with a nostalgia for things past, and nourishing herself upon those crises which cannot be dissociated from the forward march of history.

We may honestly recognize that the course of events in the nineteenth century sometimes gave an appearance of reasonableness to opponents of the Church. But the historical period which began with the first world war, and which has not yet reached its term, has given them the lie in a very striking manner. The doctrine so dear to marxism, that 'humanity is truth', has now been built into history—but it led directly to totalitarianism and to a persecution, not of Christianity only, but of reason itself; an oppression, for which the Inquisition in its very worst colours would offer, as to harshness and cruelty, a very poor pattern and precedent.

It is moreover clear that secular liberalism has not been able to solve the problem of transition to democracy, to a *régime*, that is, within which each individual would be able to feel that he was himself the object of the whole of the social process. Thus it has lost its position in history, and is now compelled by its theorists to be content with 'crying up the past', and caressing the image of a world which vanished yesterday.

On the other hand, the work of defending human dignity, as well as the arduous labours involved in the transition from liberalism to democracy, have in the main been assumed by Catholics, who have undertaken, not only the defence of their own liberty when they are in a minority, but also of general liberty even when they find themselves in a majority.

The Catholic Position. If we are to form any precise idea of

the Catholic doctrine of tolerance, we must rigorously dissociate its principle from subjectivist philosophical affirmations. It is most certain that the Catholic Church, conscious as she is of being the sole legitimate representative of truth, cannot be other than intolerant on matters of dogma. Religious indifference she can only repudiate, and she must insist that the truths of religion correspond to metaphysical realities, and are no mere symbols for attitudes of life. Indeed, if a situation could be envisaged in which the Church did *not* profess dogmatic intolerance, she would thereby, and necessarily, subject herself to a view of truth which was merely historical; so that her universality would appear as no more than a rough and ready historical manifestation of the religion of liberty or the religion of humanity.

Dogmatic intolerance is thus closely associated with the very idea of the eternity of truth. It is clear that to deny its rightness would lead to holding as equal in validity, even where the historical situation is a different one, propositions which are morally or theologically opposed to each other. Dogmatic intolerance must therefore be maintained, but it ought not to give rise to an attitude of civil, or practical, intolerance, as was pointed out by Pius XI in the encyclical mentioned above.

The Catholic defence of human liberty must be completely separated from the affirmations of 'the religion of liberty', that is, from the false elevation of freedom (of the human mind in its historical development) to the rank of a religion. As we read the text of Pius XI's encyclical, and parallel passages from the writings of other Popes in this century, we may observe *the beginnings of a theology of tolerance and liberty of conscience*. One of the greatest and noblest tasks confronting present-day theology is to work out a fully satisfactory treatment of this concept of tolerance, free from the philosophical postulates of rationalism and liberal immanentism.³

Such a theology, if it is to be complete, would have to show how, from the idea of the eternity and objectivity of truth—in a word, from its divinity—there flows also that of respecting liberty of consciences; whereas from the idea of truth as something merely human there flows only the extreme intolerance of the secular totalitarian religions. As expounded by Catholic thought,

3 R. Aubert, *L'Enseignement sur le Libéralisme*, in *Tolérance et communauté humaine*, Casterman, 1951 (a symposium).

the idea of tolerance is an extremely simple one, and may be thus expressed: 'No man ought to be compelled against his will to accept the Catholic faith'. Respect for truth requires freedom of consent. A truth imposed is a truth which has by no means been freely accepted *as such*. Persuasion, as Rosmini so rightly said, cannot be forced.

This brings us to asking what that *greater good* might be, which justifies the Catholic in showing religious tolerance. And a provisional answer may be thus worded: 'The requirement that truth should be *recognised* as true'.

This means that the affirmation of the objectivity of truth implies its own distinction from the subjective act by which a human being assents to it. This is why recognition of the objective nature of truth provides at the same time a basis for the liberty of the person. In the case where a truth is imposed, there is a confusion between religion and politics: truth tends to become an instrument in the hands of the politician, and it is a very easy matter to provide confirmation of this fact from history. As to the truth which is imposed, we find that, in place of the living, yet subordinate, relationship of politics to religion, as desired by the Christian conscience, we have that inclusion of religion within politics which is the typical feature of every form of paganism, and which we find today in its extreme form in the totalitarian systems.

We may also say that it is the presence of God in the human soul—a doctrine proper to *Christian* anthropology—which is the reason, both for the absolute value of the human person and his power to transcend history, and also for the necessity of persuasion and the prohibition of coercion and violence.

If this be a principle which is valid for every metaphysical and moral truth, it is *a fortiori* valid in the domains of faith and of grace. Who indeed could claim, without manifest sacrilege, to substitute his own will for the action of God upon the soul? No theologian of our own day could fail to stigmatize as a tyrant the politician who sought to impose a form of religion upon his subjects by force. How, indeed, could any man think of imposing Christianity, without throwing open the door to sacrilege, and especially—and worst of all—to sacrilege against the eucharist?

The Catholic Principle of Civil Toleration is in Conformity with Tradition. So far as modern times are concerned, we may affirm

with certainty that the possibility of dealing in a new way with the problem of liberty of consciences and of civil tolerance first made its appearance under Leo XIII. He declared in his encyclical *Immortale Dei*: 'If the Church decides that it is not permissible to put the various Protestant sects on an equal legal footing with the true religion, she does not thereby condemn those heads of state who, in view of a good to be attained, or an evil to be prevented, tolerate in practice that each of these sects should have its own place in the State. It is moreover the custom of the Church to see to it with the greatest care that no man be forced to embrace the Catholic faith against his will, according to the wise observation of St Augustine: "A man cannot believe against his will"' (*In Joann.* xxvi, 2).

This means that with Leo XIII emphasis begins to be put, not only on dogmatic intolerance (which is maintained unimpaired), or on the historical evils which civil tolerance may prevent (such as wars of religion) but also on the positive good which can be promoted by religious liberty: the protection of the freedom of the act of faith. It is very easy to see the connection between this concept of liberty and the same pope's call for a return to thomism.

The doctrine is clearly affirmed in the encyclical '*Libertas*':

'Freedom can also mean that man as a citizen has the right to follow the will of God according to his conscience, and to obey his commandments without any interference. This true liberty of the children of God, which is so powerful a vindication of the dignity of the human person, is beyond all violence and all oppression. It has always been the object of the Church's desires, and of its affectionate regard. It was this liberty which the apostles urged with so much constancy, which the apologists defended in their writings, and which an unnumbered host of martyrs have consecrated in their blood.'

The idea is very widespread, among Catholics as well as unbelievers, that this modern view of freedom is no more than a concession to the spirit of the times, suggested by prudence, but made with a very poor grace. Yet it would be easy to show that this freedom, in the terms defended by modern popes from Leo XIII to Pius XII, is firmly grounded in tradition and clearly enunciated by St Thomas: '*Et tales nullo modo sunt ad fidem compellendi, ut ipsi credant: quia credere voluntatis est*' (*Summa Theol.* IIa. IIae., 10, viii).

However, even though it can be shown that such theses, in particular the distinction between dogmatic tolerance and civil tolerance, are no more than developments from traditional principles, an easy and apparently legitimate objection may be raised; how is it that these principles have been so slow in producing these developments? After all, it can hardly be denied that the mediaeval Inquisition persecuted liberty of consciences; or that in the nineteenth century the immediate sense of a great many expressions used by Gregory XVI and Pius IX is explicitly against religious liberty.

In meeting this objection we must make it quite clear that the problem of religious liberty is an essentially modern one; and so we have to distinguish carefully between the doctrine of the Catholic Church (which is unchanging) and the theoretical or speculative repercussions of any given historical situation. That said, we are in a position to see that the mediaeval Inquisition was not an essential factor in the Catholic Church's discipline, but a historical phenomenon to be explained in terms of the particular spiritual situation of the middle ages. It was a period marked by the unity of a faith that was lived. One can understand how it was then, that the middle ages concentrated their attention on the *objective truth*, and left the *subjective* aspect of a man's adherence to the truth somewhat in the shadows. Hence it is natural that they should insist on dogmatic intolerance, while rather under-emphasizing civil tolerance. Granted the unity of faith that marked the Christian middle ages, anyone who withdrew from the Church was a heretic in the strictest and formal sense of the word; you could not talk about a variety of religious denominations, of what you might call hereditary heresies; and in any case the heretic was not persecuted so much for his error as for cutting himself off from the unity of faith and love which constitutes the religious community.

It is not then very surprising that freedom of consciences was not at that time a live issue. What is important is to enquire if at the heart of the Roman Church's brand of Christianity, as distinct from other mediaeval variations of the religion, the principles were to be found for facing the issue when new historical climates should force it to the fore; as we have seen, the answer can only be 'Yes'.

As for the affirmations of Gregory XVI and Pius IX in the

nineteenth century, we cannot but admit that upon examination they do not give an impression of having stressed in the least our distinction between dogmatic tolerance and civil tolerance; they express instead a total intransigence at the theoretical level, to the point of preventing Catholics from granting any *spontaneous* recognition of freedom for people who think differently from themselves. However, here again we must consider these pontifical utterances in relation to the actual opponents their authors had in mind.

Now most of what the nineteenth century called liberalism, would today be labelled radicalism; that is to say, nineteenth-century liberalism usually tied its political theories to an explicitly anti-Catholic philosophy of life in general, to affirmations of 'the modern conscience' in contradistinction to the relics of 'mediaeval darkness and superstition'. The freedom to be granted to all forms of worship and opinion really meant, very often, in the minds of its promoters, a denial of freedom to Catholic worship, since the whole point of religious freedom was to purge this 'residue of mediaeval intolerances' from the modern conscience. A sort of Inquisition in reverse was established, which used the penalty of ridicule instead of the stake, and simply excluded catholicism from serious discussion, as the outmoded expression of a pre-scientific mentality.

In thus linking freedom to humanistic rationalism, the radical (equals the nineteenth-century liberal) is not repudiating dogmatism, but simply replacing the old dogmas by what one could label as the dogma of the modern conscience. And so it was nineteenth-century liberalism itself which put the whole argument on to the dogmatic level; and this explains why the utterances of the popes were so predominantly concerned with reiterating the principle of dogmatic intolerance which, as we have seen, the Church simply could not possibly disown.

We can surely say that in the twentieth century the opponent has changed, and that one at least of the nineteenth-century equations, that between humanistic rationalism and the assertion of freedom, has turned out to be false both in theory and practice. Today the cause of civilization is manifestly bound up with respect for personal freedom, and the cause of barbarism linked with a persecuting intolerance of extreme ruthlessness, which nobody

could pretend derives from any doctrine formed in the bosom of catholicism.

Our purpose has been to show that the Church today, in coming to the defence of liberty, is not simply adopting an attitude forced on her by historical necessity, nor compromising with principles different from her own, but is quite clearly re-asserting in a new historical context the dignity of the human person in conjunction with the primacy of truth, a joint principle which has ever been the constant standard of her teaching and her activity.



IN MIND OF HEAVENLY THINGS

An Ascensiontide Meditation by PAX

EACH year I am dazzled anew by what Paul Claudel calls 'the atmosphere of glory' that is the Ascension. Perhaps I am prejudiced, as the Ascension once marked the end of a long trial of ill-health when I was allowed to make my solemn vows and final monastic profession.

It was the odder as in the past I had so often been ill on that day. So much so that I wondered if lying on one's back were not, after all, the best way of looking up at the sky and, paradoxically enough, of following our ascending Lord to glory.

A very ancient ascensiontide hymn remarks that it was
 'after being spat upon, after being scourged,
 after the cross, that he rose to the Father's throne'.

The beginning of the Ascension is the way of the cross. We climb Calvary and mount the cross before we ascend to the Father. But the best way of ascending is to be in him, who is the way, who said, 'No man cometh unto the Father, but by me'. The way must also be in us.

As St Augustine remarks (in Treatise 24 on John): 'By many it is understood that the Son was glorified by the Father in that he spared him not, but delivered him up for us all'. But if that were all, there would be none of that admirable 'atmosphere of glory' that is the chief note of the Ascension. So St Augustine continues: 'But if he can be said to be glorified by his passion,

how much more so by his resurrection (and *a fortiori* by his ascension)? For in his passion, his humility rather than his glory is set forth . . . but God hath also exalted him, giving him a name which is above all names, that in the name of Jesus, every knee should bow and every tongue confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of the Father . . .’.

As the hymn at matins points out, the Ascension is very much mankind’s feast. It is we who ascend with our head.

‘With trembling there, the angels see
The changed estate of man,
The flesh which sinned
By flesh redeemed,
Man in the godhead reign!

All the ascensiontide liturgy is the long contemplation by the Church of the scene described in Acts, i, 1-14: ‘“Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” But he said “It is not for you to know the times nor the moments, which the Father has put in his own power, but you will receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem and in Judea and in Samaria and even to the uttermost parts of the earth”’. And when he had said these things, while they looked on he was raised up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. . . .’ ‘Then’, continues St Luke, ‘they returned to Jerusalem from the mount.’

How fruitful of meditation that last sentence for a contemplative! At the Ascension, in very truth, ‘they returned to Jerusalem’, ‘that Jerusalem that is above’, the heavenly Jerusalem, ‘from the mount’. They returned in him, with him to the Father, no less than they went back to the earthly Jerusalem to await the Father’s promise.

‘I am nothing, I have nothing and I desire nothing’, cried the English mystic, Walter Hilton, ‘but Jesus, and to be with him in peace in Jerusalem.’

‘And when they were come in’; we have to ‘come in’ to what one of the Church Fathers calls ‘the inner court of the mind’, before we can ‘go up’ to the Father with Jesus.

‘They were all with one mind persevering in prayer with the women and Mary, the Mother of Jesus’; surely that is full of meaning these days when our hearts are full of the Holy Father’s plans for the Ecumenical Council and his great desire for the

realization of our Lord's own prayer '*ut unum sint*'! Another phrase that should nourish our prayer is 'where abode Peter . . .'. It is always wise to be where Peter is when seeking one-ness and the Father's face with Jesus.

'Be not sorrowful', says Jesus. 'It is time that I should return to him that sent me. I pray to the Father that he may keep you, Alleluia' (response at matins).

'When Christ ascended on high', runs another response, 'he led captivity captive. He gave gifts to men'; and what gifts! Eternal life, the Father's face, partaking in the godhead! We should scarcely dare to say these things had not holy Church said them first in the very mass! 'The Son of God', Irenaeus dares to say, 'became man, that man might become the Son of God', and another, even more daringly, says: 'God became man that man might become God.' But they merely echo Jesus himself who quoted the psalm, 'I said, ye are gods'.

As St Leo magnificently says (Sermon 2 on the Ascension): 'Even in the form of a servant, many signs of his divinity flashed forth, but when the bonds of death had been broken after the passion, weakness became strength, mortality immortality, contumely glory. Our joy is that our nature in Christ is advanced above all the heavenly hosts, all the ranks of angels, far beyond the heights of all the powers, to sit with God the Father.'

'Faith', he says again, 'is increased by the Lord's ascension and the coming of the Holy Ghost, so that neither bonds nor prison, nor banishment, nor hunger, nor fire, nor the teeth of wild beasts nor any torments devised by cruelty has affrighted it. This faith has cast out devils and raised the dead to life.' And best of all, perhaps: 'The advantage of the ascension is that everything that before was a cause of fear has become a cause of joy'. So the Ascension is the feast of perfect love that casts out fear.

The reason for this is that 'they had lifted up the inward gaze of their souls' (a contemplative I know often talks of one's 'other eyes') 'to the divinity of him sitting at the right hand of God, the Father'. How splendidly audacious what follows: 'They were no longer hindered by the interposition of bodily vision from directing their mind to that which, descending, had never been absent from the Father, nor, in ascending, withdrawn from themselves'. Truly 'in an ineffable manner he began to be more present as to his divinity, when he became farther off as to his humanity . . .

if our minds be there', he promises, 'we shall be in peace here'.

'To see God', says St Augustine, 'thou must be made clean . . . "blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God".' (Sermon 2.) Again, in Sermon 3 he says, 'Let everyone that is faithful, having received so much, learn to hope, and hold the goodness of God in the past and present as a pledge for what is yet to come'.

Perhaps one of the loveliest passages ever penned on the Ascension is St Gregory's Homily 29: 'Behold he comes, leaping and skipping upon the hills. In coming to redeem us, he did indeed, as it were, make leaps—from heaven to the womb, from the womb to the manger, from the manger to the cross, from the cross to the sepulchre, from the sepulchre back to heaven; to incite us to follow him, the Truth made leaps for our sake, he rejoiced as a giant to run his way, that from our hearts we may say to him, "Draw us, and we will run after thee, in the odour of thy ointments". It behoves us to follow him thither in our hearts, where we believe him to have ascended in body. Let nothing below delight us . . . since we have a Father in heaven.'

On this day, says the liturgy, he set our frailty on the right hand of God! Small wonder that our Lord in one of the responses of matins tells us: 'Let not your heart be troubled: I go to the Father . . . and I will send you, Alleluia, the Spirit of truth, and your heart shall rejoice, Alleluia!'

And after such a promise, how could we not, as holy Church prays, 'live in mind of heavenly things'?



THE PASSION OF THE HOLY MARTYRS PERPETUA AND FELICITY: I

(Translated by H. O'D.)

SS Perpetua and Felicity and their companions were martyred about A.D. 202, probably at Carthage. Their Acta include a kind of diary kept by Perpetua, and an account of a vision by Saturus, also one of the group, both written in a very direct and unliterary way, in considerable contrast with the rather fulsome style of the narrator, usually thought to be Tertullian.

HISTORIC examples of steadfast faith are collected and put in writing, because they bear witness to the power of God's grace, and help to inspire men; when read they come before us again, as it were, so that God shall be honoured

and men given strength. Surely similar accounts from our own times ought to be circulated, as being just as useful for both these purposes? At some future date these contemporary examples will themselves be respectably historic, and thus of use to coming generations; even though at present they carry less weight, because what is past is considered more hallowed than what is new. But we believe that the power of the Holy Spirit is one and the same, whatever the period of history; and so we should be more impressed with all the latest occurrences, for these are nearer to the very last things of all, and grace will be ever more lavishly given as history draws towards its destined conclusion. *And it shall come to pass, in the last days (saith the Lord), I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy: and your young men shall see visions; and your old men shall dream dreams.*

So we acknowledge and revere contemporary visions, just as we do the prophecies, for they have equally been promised to us. Indeed, we make use of all the other manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the service of the Church, because it is to her that the same Spirit was sent, administering all gifts to all men, just as the Lord distributed to each one. How necessary, then, that we should keep records of such visions, and also make God's glory widely known by reading them. Otherwise the weak-minded or the weak in faith might be led to suppose that it was only to our forefathers that God's grace was given, to raise up martyrs and vouchsafe revelations. Yet God always performs what he promised to, giving testimony to those who do not believe and supporting those who do.

And so we too, brethren and dear children, tell you what we have heard and handled; so that those of you who were present there may be reminded of the glory of the Lord, and those who only hear about these events may now have fellowship with the holy martyrs—and through them with the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be honour and glory for ever and ever, Amen.

*

A group of young catechumens was arrested—Revocatus, and Felicity his fellow-slave, and Saturninus and Secundulus. Also among them was Vivia Perpetua, a young married woman from a good family, well brought up, whose mother and father were still living. She was about twenty-two. She had two brothers, one of whom was a catechumen like herself, and a baby son,

whom she was still feeding. We can let her give the whole account of her martyrdom, just as she left it herself.

*

We were still under house-arrest, and Father because of his affection for me would keep on trying to make me turn aside and drop it all, so 'Father', I say, 'just to show what I mean, you see that bit of crockery over there, it's a jug or something, isn't it?' So he said, 'Yes, I see'. So I said to him, 'You couldn't call it something different from what it is, could you?' And he says, 'No'.

'Well, I can't call myself something different from what I am either, & that's a Christian.'

Father was *furious* at this & flew at me as if he wanted to scratch my eyes out, but all he could do was give me a shaking & off he went, foiled & the devil's arguments with him. Then for a few days Father wasn't around & I thanked God & made the most of his absence. It was during those few days that we were baptized—the Holy Ghost told me, though, that all I should ask for from the waters of baptism was strength to put up with everything.

*

A few days later we were taken to prison, & I was absolutely horrified as I'd never been anywhere so dark. What a dreadful day! The stifling heat from the crowds & the soldiers so rough & on top of it all, me worried to death about the baby.

Then those kind deacons Tertius & Pomponius who were looking after us did a bit of bribing to get us let into a better part of the prison for a few hours' peace. So we went out of the dungeon & everyone relaxed. I fed the baby which was nearly dying of hunger by this time. I was worried about him, so I talked things over with Mother & cheered up my brother & said they should look after the baby. It made me awfully miserable seeing them being so miserable about me.

I was all het up about this for several days, & so I managed to arrange to keep the baby with me in prison, & then all at once I was quite alright & stopped being worried & nervy about him & all of a sudden the prison turned into a palace for me, so that there wasn't anywhere else I'd rather have been.

*

The next thing was that my brother said to me, 'Perpetua, you can get great favours now, so why not ask for a Vision &

find out whether you're going to be martyred or whether you'll get off?' And knowing that I talked with Our Lord a good deal & had lots of kindnesses from Him, I promised him quite faithfully that I would & I said 'I'll tell you all about it tomorrow'. So I asked, & this is what was shown me.

I saw a golden ladder, terribly high, reaching up all the way to Heaven, & very narrow, so that you could only go up one at a time, & there were all sorts of iron things fixed to its sides. There were swords & spears & hooks & daggers there, so that if anyone climbed up carelessly or without looking where he was going he'd get cut to pieces on all those sharp edges. And right underneath the ladder crouched an absolutely enormous Dragon lying in wait for people wanting to climb the ladder & frightening them so that they wouldn't.

The first to go up was Saturus, who had been the cause of our conversion & who'd given himself up for our sakes, quite off his own bat as he hadn't been there when we were arrested, & he got to the top of the ladder & turned round & said, 'Perpetua, I'm helping you, but watch out that Dragon doesn't get hold of you'. And I said, 'It won't hurt me, IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST'. And it put its head out from underneath the ladder, slowly as if it was afraid of me, & I trod on its head just as I would have trodden on the bottom rung.

And I climbed up & found an enormous garden & a Man with golden hair sitting in the middle dressed up like a shepherd, quite magnificent, milking His sheep, & thousands of people all in white standing round Him. And He looked up & saw me & said, 'Well done, dear child', & He called me over & gave me about a mouthful of the cheese He'd made from the milk & I took it in my cupped hands & ate it & all the people standing round said, 'AMEN'. And with the noise I woke up, still tasting something sweet, what I don't know.

And I told it all to my brother at the first opportunity & we realized that this meant martyrdom & from now on we didn't have any more hope in *this* world.

*

A few days later a rumour went round that we were going to be tried. And now my father suddenly arrived from the city, worn out & depressed, & made his way in to me to break my determination, saying, 'My child, take pity on my old age, take

pity on your father—if I've still any right to be called Father by you. Aren't these the hands that have guided you to this flower of your youth? Haven't I loved you more than your brothers? So do not lay me open to men's reproaches. Think of your brothers, think of your mother & your aunt, think of your little boy—how can he hope to survive you? Change your mind, or you'll be the death of us all. None of us will ever be able to hold up our heads in public again if anything happens to you.' Father was saying all this with real feeling, kissing my hands & throwing himself at my feet, speaking to me in tears with great deference. And I felt very sorry for my old father as he'd be the only one out of all my family who couldn't welcome my martyrdom, & I cheered him up, saying, 'Whatever happens in that court must be what God wants. For, you know, we're not in our own power but in God's.' And he was very sad going away.

*

Another day just when we were having dinner we were suddenly whisked away to be tried, & came to the Forum. The report got round quickly to all the places round the Forum & soon there was a real crowd there. We got up into the box. When the others were questioned they confessed. Then it was my turn, & that very moment Father arrived there carrying the baby & hauled me down from the step & said beseechingly, 'Have mercy on the babe'. And the Procurator, Hilarian, who had just been made judge in place of Minucius Timinian who had died, said, 'Spare your father's old head, spare the young child. Offer sacrifice for the well-being of the Emperors.' And I replied, 'I won't'. Hilarian said, 'Are you a Christian?' And I answered, 'Yes, I am a Christian'. And as Father held his ground to try & make me give in Hilarian ordered him to be turned out & birched. And I really was just as sorry about Father's plight as if I'd been beaten myself—I felt terrible about him, having such a time in his old age. Then he passed judgment on us all & condemned us to the wild animals & in high spirits we went back to the prison. Then as the baby was used to being breast-fed by me & staying with me in prison, as soon as we got there I sent Pomponius the deacon to Father to ask for the baby. But he wouldn't hand him over. But now he's stopped wanting the breast & I haven't any more pain there either, all God's doing so

that I wouldn't be tormented with worry about the baby & the pain in my breasts both together.

*

A few days later while we were all praying, suddenly in the middle of my prayers I spoke something out loud & said, 'Dinocrates', & I was astounded as the thought of him hadn't even crossed my mind till then, & I got very sad remembering what had happened to him. And then at once I realized I could get many favours & ought to do what I could for him. And I began to pray very hard for him, pleading with Our Lord. And immediately, that very night, I was shown this in a Vision.

I saw Dinocrates coming out of somewhere dark where there were a lot of other people too, all hot & thirsty, filthy-looking & very pale & his face disfigured as it was when he died. This Dinocrates was a brother of mine, seven years old when he got sick & died with an ulcer on his face, so that his death was a horrible experience for everyone. So I prayed about this, & between him & me was a great gulf so that we couldn't reach each other. Now there was a pool of water in the place where Dinocrates was, but its sides were higher than he was & Dinocrates was standing on tiptoe as if he wanted to have a drink. I was heartbroken that he couldn't get a drink even though there was water in the pool because the sides were so high. And I woke up & realized that my brother was in torment.

But I trusted in the prayers I was going to say for his suffering & I prayed for him every day until we moved into the arena-prison—we were going to fight in the gladiator-show in the arena. That was for Gaeta Caesar's birthday, & I prayed for Dinocrates day & night, weeping & groaning away so that my prayers would be answered.

*

But the day we were actually chained up I was shown this.

I see that place, which was dark the other time I saw it, now all bright, & Dinocrates is very happy there, clean & nicely dressed. And where the sore was now I can see just a scar, & the pool I saw the other time has its sides lowered so that it only comes up to the boy's middle. And there was water flowing into it all the time & there was a golden cup full of water on the side & Dinocrates came up & started drinking out of it & the cup never got empty. And when he'd had enough he went away from the

pool & started romping round happily as children do. And I woke up.

Then I understood that he'd been released from his punishment.

*

Then after a few days Pudens, the army officer who was Governor of the prison, seeing the great power of God in us, began to think very highly of us & let lots of the brethren come & see us so that we could be a comfort to one another. But when the day for the Show was getting near Father came in to see me, worn out & depressed, & started tearing at his beard & throwing himself on the ground & then flat on his face & pleading about how old he was & saying all sorts of things, enough to move heaven & earth. I was heart-broken that he was so miserable in his old age.

*

The day before we were due to fight I saw Pomponius the deacon in a Vision coming here to the gate of the prison & knocking very hard. And I went out to him & opened the gate for him & he was wearing a flowing white robe & decorated sandals. And he said to me, 'Come on, Perpetua, I'm waiting for you'. And he took me by the hand & we started going through rough & winding places. Eventually after a lot of difficulty we arrived at the amphitheatre & he brought me into the middle of the arena & said to me, 'Don't be frightened, I'm here with you helping you', & disappeared. I found a huge crowd, wild with excitement. And as I knew I'd been given over to the beasts I couldn't make out why the beasts weren't let out at me. And in the opposite corner a horrible-looking Egyptian came out with his seconds to fight against me. And some very nice-looking young men came to be my seconds & supporters, & I was stripped & turned into a man. And my seconds started to rub me with oil as they usually do for a fight, & I see the Egyptian in the far corner rolling himself in the sand. And an absolutely gigantic Man came out, so tall that He was bigger than the top of the amphitheatre, wearing a flowing tunic with a purple sash across His chest with two stripes on it, & sandals decorated with gold & silver, & carrying the kind of staff trainers have & a green branch with golden apples on it. And He called for silence & said, 'If this Egyptian beats this woman he can kill her with his sword, & if she wins she'll get this branch'. And He withdrew. And we

came to the middle & started laying into each other. He tried to get hold of my feet but I stamped on his face & jumped up in the air & started to kick him as if I was tramping on the ground. But when I saw this was taking too long I joined my hands & locked my fingers together & grabbed hold of his head & he fell flat on his face & I squashed his head. And the people started cheering & my seconds burst into song. And I went up to the Trainer & got the branch. And He kissed me & said, 'Peace be with you, my child'. And to great applause I started to go out through the Victors' gate. And I woke up & realized it wasn't the beasts I'd be fighting but the Devil, but I also knew that Victory was near at hand for me.

This is what I've written up to the day before the Show. What happens at the actual Show someone else can write, if they want to.

(To be concluded)



GAMALIEL

(Questions should be addressed to Gamaliel, c/o the Editor, THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT, Hawkesyard Priory, Rugeley, Staffs.)

Q. Is it open to a Catholic to hold that 'the brothers of Jesus' were sons of St Joseph by a former marriage?

E.C.H.

A. This opinion certainly has an ancient and respectable ancestry. It was held in the fourth century by St Epiphanius, St Hilary, and others; it was mentioned by St Augustine as a possible explanation of the phrase. But it was rejected with characteristic brusqueness by St Jerome as 'apocryphal raving', since its earliest occurrence is in the apocryphal gospel of James. He maintained that 'the brothers of Jesus' were his cousins.

Both suggestions were made with the same idea, namely of defending the perpetual virginity of our Lady, by showing that 'the brothers of Jesus' need not have been sons of hers. Quite apart from the dogmatic teaching of the Church, it does violence to the gospel narratives to suppose that they were. In the first place, it is unthinkable in the social context of that place and time that younger brothers should have behaved towards the first-

born of the family as 'the brothers of Jesus' behaved towards him (Mark iii, 21, 31; John vii, 3ff). Secondly if our Lord had younger brothers, he would scarcely have entrusted his mother to the beloved disciple when he was dying on the cross (John xix, 27).

When it comes to choosing between St Epiphanius and St Jerome, we would have to be a little more cautious than the latter in assuming that support for an opinion from an apocryphal gospel rules it out of court. This same apocryphal gospel of St James is the ultimate source for the stories of St Anne and St Joachim, who have been accepted by Catholic devotion with only St Bernard raising his voice in protest; and much more important, this apocryphal gospel gives us a detailed story to support belief in our Lady's bodily assumption into heaven. (As a matter of fact, this support from a not very respectable quarter delayed the doctrine's universal acceptance, and in the eighth or ninth century some sceptical monk wrote a letter purporting to come from the pen of St Jerome—ob. A.D. 420—dismissing the assumption as an apocryphal fairy story, just as the genuine Jerome dismissed the idea of a previous marriage of St Joseph.)

However, what evidence there is does make it rather less probable that 'the brothers of Jesus' were sons of St Joseph by a former marriage. Mark vi, 3, gives their names as 'James and Joses and Judas and Simon'—Matt. xiii, 55, 'James and Joseph and Simon and Judas'. The form 'Joses' for 'Joseph' in Mark's list is very unusual. It occurs twice more in the same gospel, xv, 40: 'and there were women watching [the crucifixion] from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and Joses'—Matt. xxvii, 56, 'Mary the mother of James and Joseph'—and xv, 47. James and Joseph were of course both very common names; but the use of the very *uncommon* form Joses in both cases in Mark, and the keeping of the same order, suggest quite strongly that these two whose mother was present at the crucifixion were 'the brothers of the Lord'. If their mother was still alive at the time of the crucifixion, not even the most hardened agnostic will ask us to believe that she was the wife of St Joseph—unless he would identify her with our Lady. But in that case, quite apart from the objections we have already seen to 'the brothers of Jesus' being our Lady's younger sons, we have to accept that the mother of Christ—and he after all is the subject of the gospels—is identified by Mark as 'the mother of James the

less and Joses' and by Matthew, in one place, simply as 'the other Mary' (xxviii, 1). This is taxing even the most willing credulity.

James and Joseph, then, if they are the sons of this other Mary, and also 'the brothers of the Lord', must be cousins of his in some way. It seems to me unlikely that their mother was our Lady's sister—two sisters of the same name would have led to endless domestic confusion; perhaps she was a cousin, or her husband may have been our Lady's brother. It is the purest conjecture.

As for Simon and Jude, Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History*, written in the first half of the fourth century, quotes Hegesippus, a chronicler of the second century, as saying that 'after the martyrdom of James the Just [the brother of the Lord], once more a son of his uncle, Simeon the son of Clopas, was constituted bishop [of Jerusalem]. All proposed him, as being another cousin of the Lord's' (*Eccl. Hist.* IV, 22). The Greek word used for 'uncle' means 'paternal uncle'; so Clopas (cf. John xix, 25, perhaps also Luke xxiv, 18) would be St Joseph's brother. Whether Jude was a brother of Simon-Simeon we cannot say.

The historical probabilities then are against 'the brothers of Jesus' being sons of St Joseph by a former marriage. Theological arguments have also been propounded against the idea of St Joseph having contracted a former marriage, but I must confess they do not strike me as being particularly compelling.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Religious Poverty

DEAR EDITOR,

The life of the Little Brothers of Jesus involves living conditions modelled on those of the very poorest, adapts itself to the current social conditions, seeks identification with the condition and work of the poor in the world, relies for its material sustenance on the earning of wages.

The object of Fr Carpentier's criticism, in his lecture printed in your February number, is not, I understand, this particular congregation but certain views current in France at the time of his address. However, for the sake of those who, like myself, may at first have mistaken the sense of this criticism, I should like to

point out that the way of life above mentioned is essential to that of the Little Brothers, and has been ratified in the examination and approval of their constitutions by the Sacred Congregation of Religious.

The aims of the Little Brothers are exactly those which Fr Carpentier has put forward as belonging to religious poverty: to witness to the evangelical way of life; to express love as between brothers (this, though, they desire to manifest not as internal but as universal, particularly with regard to their fellow workers); detachment from possessions; orientation to a life to come; a keen expectation of the Lord's return. Furthermore, in their undertaking of what is hard and humble in daily life they do endeavour to witness to the sacrificial character of the redemption, and also, their way does show men how society can be made whole precisely without any involvement in the 'jealous struggle between rich and poor'.

St Anthony, as Fr Carpentier points out, in order to revive the *vita apostolica*, was forced by the structure of society to seek the desert. The Little Brothers of Jesus bring back the witness of that life into the midst of society suffering under the weight of modern civilization; to quote their Prior, Fr Voillaume, they are thus 'able to join the desert to the crowd'.

Yours, etc.

S.C.

Saints and Missionaries

DEAR EDITOR,

May I offer congratulations on the excellent *Mission* number of your review for March, and especially on the article entitled 'The Spiritual Life of the Mission', which bears the imprint of all the marks of the Church, including the fifth—common sense.

I would however like to raise a point, perhaps something of a verbal quibble, concerning the end of Fr Humphreys' first paragraph. It said: 'If the missionary can be both saint and missionary, well and good, but *the essential thing* (my italics) is that he be a good missionary, understanding the technique of the work'. This is surely open to misinterpretation by, for instance, the 'bookstall-flicker-through', who without digesting the context might have the impression that saintliness is by way of being an unnecessary item in the missionary's qualification.

From the remainder of the article it is evident that it is from the point of view of the spiritual life of the mission that the missionary's understanding of the technique of the work is said to be the essential thing. Though as religion is 'caught not taught', perhaps sanctity might come in useful!

Sincerely in Christ,

MOTHER HILDA MARY

Convent of the Assumption,
Richmond, Yorks.
March 12th 1960.

[As Fr Humphreys is so far away in South Africa, perhaps I had better reply on his behalf. First of all, as editor, how I wish there were hundreds of bookstalls with people standing at them flicking through *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT*! But I fear our correspondent gives us more credit for a large popular public than we deserve.

I think perhaps Fr Humphreys was using the word 'saint' in a rather stricter and narrower sense than Mother Hilda Mary. If by saint you simply mean what St Paul seems to have meant by the word, namely a good and sincere and faithful Christian, then I am sure Fr Humphreys would agree that a man cannot be a good missionary unless he is such a man. But nowadays we use the word 'saint' to mean the person of exceptional holiness and goodness, and especially, in popular usage, the person of exceptional piety. What Fr Humphreys is denying is that the saintlier the man in this sense, the better the missionary. Experience shows that this is a defective argument, not only in the case of missionaries, but also of superiors, novice-masters, nurses, school-teachers, monks, nuns, popes, fathers and mothers. Sanctity is not achieved in a vacuum. It is not as though one boy might say 'I am going to be a saint when I grow up', while another says 'I am going to be an engine-driver' or 'I am going to be a missionary'. The best way for missionaries and engine-drivers to become saints is by doing their best to be good missionaries and engine-drivers. But it is absurd to say that the best way for saints to become missionaries (or engine-drivers) is by being good saints. *A propos* of this question I have just been told of a saying of St Thomas (probably legendary) when he was engaged along with his brethren in electing a prior. One candidate's sanctity was proposed as a good

reason for electing him, and St Thomas said: 'If he is a saint, let him pray for us; if he is a good preacher, let him preach; if he is a prudent man, let him be our prior'.—ED.]



REVIEWS

MOTHER OF THE REDEEMER—ASPECTS OF DOCTRINE AND DEVOTION.

Edited by Fr Kevin McNamara. (Dublin, M. H. Gill and Son Ltd; 35s.)

Many of us have felt the need for an up-to-date, soundly theological symposium of mariology in English, one which would avoid the exaggerations to which this branch of theology seems peculiarly prone and yet give a full picture of Mary's place in the theology of the Church. That is why it is good to have this present book which to some extent answers this need. It represents the lectures given at Maynooth in 1954 at a summer school series by a team of experts, and it may be fairly said as the publishers claim that 'all the main headings of marian doctrine are here skilfully and judiciously treated'.

The book opens with four general chapters on Mary in the old and new testaments and in tradition. The chapters on the old testament are by Fr Duncker, O.P. The first deals with modern interpretations (especially those of Rigaux and Coppens) of what has become a notorious crux in mariology, Genesis iii, 15; the second discusses the interpretations of Isaias vii, 14. Both are done quite fully but some may find it heavy reading. The new testament chapter by Fr Kearns, O.P., aims at showing how new trends of research and discussion among exegetes are throwing new light on even familiar marian texts. Luke i and ii have felt the fullest impact of these new methods and this chapter examines the new approach as exemplified particularly in the annunciation narrative. The general chapter on Mary in the patristic age is also by Fr Duncker and leans heavily (as he himself acknowledges) on Joussard's excellent study in Volume I of *Maria*. It shows the development of marian thought in the writings of the Fathers according to the three themes of divine maternity, virginity and holiness.

After these four introductory chapters there are specialized chapters on the divine maternity (Fr McGreevy), the immaculate conception and the assumption (Mgr Davis), the virginity of our Lady (Fr Dermot Ryan), Mary's role in the redemption and the mediation of graces (Fr O'Grady, S.J.), our Lady queen of the universe (Fr McNamara), our Lady and the Church (Fr O'Donoghue, O.D.C.), the meaning of Lourdes

(Fr C. Daly), and the doctrinal content of Irish marian piety (Fr Cunnane).

Not all the contributions will be on the same level of interest—this is inevitable in any symposium. The last chapter, for example, was in one way indicated by the circumstances of place, and no doubt it was felt that some national contribution would be appropriate, as of course it is. The chapter by Fr Daly may also be of a more general appeal, although it offers an interesting approach to the whole question of Lourdes and a *résumé* of the more recent writings and investigations on the subject.

Of the specialized studies I found the paper on the co-redemption somewhat disappointingly conservative. There is no new light shed on the question, but then perhaps we have reached saturation point on this particular doctrine. At all events Fr O'Grady plays absolutely safe and there is no place here for *avant-garde* theories of people like Llamera or Lebon. He follows the same approach on the mediation, he is most cautious on the kind of causality possible to our Lady in the distribution of grace. If one wants to be ultra-conservative on these two questions then everything is here that needs to be said.

One should make mention of an interesting chapter on our Lady's virginity by Fr Dermot Ryan. This not only gives a full presentation of the development of the doctrine, but also takes full account of the recent views of Mittlerer on the exact constituent of *virginitas in partu*. Another noteworthy chapter deals with our Lady and the Church—a subject absorbing more and more attention in modern mariology. It throws helpful light on the modern approach to Mary as a type of the Church and the views of modern German theologians such as Rahner and Müller on this subject.

The book is well indexed and some of the papers carry a select bibliography as a guide to further reading. It may not be quite what the expert wants but it will certainly be found most useful by the busy priest who feels wistfully that he ought to try and catch up on all this 'modern stuff' on our Lady and is daunted by the lack of accessible material. The main themes are all here and are well treated in the main, and it is hoped that this book will have a wide circulation not only among priests and seminarians but also among educated lay people who wish to know more of our Lady's place in the theology of the Church.

P. J. EGAN, S.M.M.

OUR LADY IN THE LITURGY. By Dom E. Flicoteaux; translated by Dom Aldhelm Dean. (Challoner Publications, London; 7s. 6d.)

The supercilious liturgist who is apt to deplore the artistic excesses of May processions or point with disdain at some good soul saying the

rosary during sung compline is probably only one of many who think that devotion to our Lady and an attachment to the liturgy can never go hand in hand. This little book by Dom Flicoteaux should do much to break down the artificial barrier erected between marian and liturgical devotion. In this book he invites us to integrate our Lady with the liturgy, not only in her own feasts but throughout the Church's year, by showing how closely our Lady is in fact associated with the whole pattern of the mysteries of our salvation celebrated in the course of the liturgical year.

The book has two parts. The first deals with our Lady in the mysteries of salvation as celebrated in the various phases of the liturgy throughout the year. This is not, however, a sort of marian Guéranger. Rather it lays special stress on those seasons which have a special relation to our Lady. So, for example, the visitation, the presentation and even the *Magnificat* have chapters to themselves, whereas a discussion of our Lady's place in the liturgical celebration of the mysteries of Christ's public life has only a short chapter—which includes a final word, perhaps somewhat inconsequently, on our Lady of joy.

The second part deals with feasts instituted in honour of our Lady with the aim of showing the deep lessons of spirituality to be found in them—the immaculate conception, the assumption (which has the rather precious title of 'Our Lady's Easter') and other feasts, with a final chapter on our Lady in the non-festal liturgy (the little office, etc.,) and an appendix on the *Salve Regina*.

For those who have to speak on this subject, or in their addresses to marian sodalities want to connect our Lady with the liturgy of the season, this little book should be of very considerable help. It is translated from the French by Dom Aldhelm Dean and one wonders if the translator has tried to keep something of the *affettuoso* character of the French text; those who prefer a brusquer style for their spiritual reading may find it tending to cloy at times—and more generally, one might think that 7s. 6d. is rather high for a paper-back book. But this is perhaps niggardly criticism of what for many people will prove a helpful book and a worthwhile addition to any marian library.

P. J. EGAN, S.M.M.

WHY CHRIST. By B. C. Butler, Abbot of Downside. (Darton, Longmans & Todd; 10s. 6d.)

This is a very short book and very full of matter, for into his 164 pages the Abbot of Downside compresses an analysis of the condition of modern man, his basic though obscurely felt needs, the development of religion throughout history, Christianity's claim to be the sole possessor of final truth, the origins of Christianity, and the claims of

the Catholic Church to be the one true Church of Christ. Lastly, there is a chapter on the life of faith.

The weakest part of this otherwise admirable and lucid work is that which deals with the non-Christian religions. The Zoroastrianism described on page 57 is not that of Zoroaster, but the Zoroastrian dualism of the Sassanian period; for in Zoroaster's own writing Satan is not independent of God as he was later to become. Profoundly shocking in a work by a scholar of Dom Butler's eminence is his description of Darius as the 'Mede'. There never was a more true nor a more self-conscious 'Persian' than Darius; nor outside Israel was there ever a truer and more devout monotheist. Further, can one still get away with dismissing Islam (or Muhammedanism, as Dom Butler prefers to call it) as a 'religion of a lower grade than either Judaism or Christianity'? In any case it is perhaps the one non-Christian religion that continues to exhibit a capacity for growth.

The principal merit of this book is perhaps its representation of traditional Catholic arguments in a manner that is fresh and new. It brings the fresh wind of common sense into the frosty atmosphere of biblical criticism, and it leaves the Catholic reader with a fresh sense of wonder at the mystery of unbelief. Dom Butler would persuade the non-believer to come back to the Bible as if to a book he had never read before, and he would even have him read the various books of the new testament in a new and unconventional order. This is surely the right approach, for it has always struck your reviewer that there is no more convincing proof that there is only one true and visible Church founded by Christ than the new testament itself. This new book by the Abbot of Downside deserves to be widely read, for there could scarcely be a better presentation of the 'brass tacks' of Christianity than this.

R. C. ZAEHNER

JESUS OUR MODEL. By Louis Colin, C.S.S.R. (Mercier; 15s.)

This is the first of Fr Colin's works to come the way of the present reviewer and in view of his evident popularity as a spiritual writer it is a bewildering book. Clearly many people have found him a helpful guide, yet one ends this book wondering why it was written.

Its theme is the fundamental one of the imitation of Christ, it is perfectly orthodox, not difficult to understand, full of excellent advice, including suggestions of the 'take one virtue per month' variety which are definitely helpful to many people. It does not seem to be intended as a 'popular' book but is aimed at those to whom the idea of taking the spiritual life seriously is no novelty, yet chapter after chapter is devoted to persuading the pious reader that the imitation of Christ is

a Good Thing. On every page the author states the obvious at some length and usually in well-worn phrases. 'We have only to contemplate and copy this Divine ideal to become, in proportion to our resemblance to it, better men. . . .' That 'only' is nice. 'To hear Mass with devotion we must recall that the sacrifice of the altar is exactly the same as that which was offered on Calvary.' 'The soul who chooses to follow Christ as his guide and model will find his path endowed (*sic*) with everything to illumine, strengthen and encourage him.'

It is all true, glorious and extraordinary, any phrase of it sufficient to give wings to the soul already practised in prayer. But when so many saints have elaborated this eternally wonderful theme, will a repetition in stock phrases really give a lift to those of us who are still thoroughly earth-bound?

ROSEMARY HAUGHTON

APOSTOLIC LIFE. Being the English Version of *L'Apostolat*. Translated by Ronald Halstead. (Blackfriars Publications; 21s.)

Between the covers (cloth) of this book no less than 200 closely printed pages are packed (large 8vo), and the price is 21s.

Now, in the original *L'Apostolat*, this bulk may have been all very well for the immense religious public in France, but, be it noted, as a paper-back, and priced at nothing like 21s. All right in French, perhaps, but not in English—and *such* English. A dispute does not *divert* anyone (p. 42), though it may create quite a diversion. Our Lord did not *moderate* his teaching to anyone's weakness of faith (p. 48): adapted it to, perhaps, or moderated it in consequence of. Such a phrase as 'The majority of we ordinary Christians' (like the translator's numerous *nights* for *mays*) does not read well (p. 131); any more than 'The apostle is utterly faithful' (p. 148). 'These purifications were nevertheless imitations of Christ, who . . .' (p. 159) is a phrase (taken word for word from the French, no doubt), intended to mean that the contradictions suffered by these particular saints were but perfect copies of those of Christ himself, who fulfilled his mission by the failure of the cross. As a last straw, having left many others unmentioned, I can but refer the reader to page 181, where the whole of the third paragraph is reproduced in one long and involved sentence.

All this about the translation, because I have not much to say in favour of the book. It is highly academic, with 'The History of the Development of the word "Apostolic"', in Part I; with 'Canon Law and the Active Religious', in Part II. It is only when Part III is reached that the reader will get something that he expected, where a Carmelite Father writes on 'The importance of the Interior Life for the Apostolate'. But why do so many priests seem to have a passion for prob-

lems? There are problems, but why emphasize them, why hand them on to religious Sisters and the laity?

We are asked (p. 180) to think 'of the state of soul of a twenty-year-old religious, who passes from a course in freudian psychology at the Sorbonne to spiritual reading from Rodrigues, or from the latest Gœncourt to the recitation of the little office of the Blessed Virgin . . .'. Or of another (p. 182) when her novitiate comes to an end: 'as she has neither her teaching diploma nor her nursing certificate from the State, she is sent to peel potatoes in the bishop's kitchen, or to patch the trousers of the young seminarists in the college sewing-room . . .'. To which this reviewer can but reply, What a foolish young lady! Fancy not finding out beforehand what one is likely to be in for: fancy, even in that case, not thinking over the matter during the novitiate, and quitting before it is too late. The old adage still holds good: Look before you leap. And the reader would do well to have a look at this volume in the booksellers' shop, to see if it is likely to be to his taste, before spending on it twenty-one shillings.

RAYMOND DEVAS, O.P.

THE QUEST FOR GOD. A Study in Benedictine Spirituality. By Dom I. Ryelandt, O.S.B. Translated by Dom M. Dillon. (Herder; 12s. 6d.)

The Benedictines always say that there is no such thing as a Benedictine method of prayer. They mean of course that there is no detailed methodical plan which sets out to lead them by various stages, up the mountains and through the tunnels, to the very highest summits of contemplation. In this sense they are not harnessed to any method, and may choose their way of ascent according to their own individual *attrait*. Some use the staircase, while others prefer to take the lift. But nevertheless, though there is no Benedictine *method* as such, there is a very definite Benedictine *way*, and this study of Benedictine spirituality points out its characteristic features.

The very title of the book is enough to warm the heart of anyone who is familiar with the Rule of St Benedict. Benedictines are taught as novices, and reminded of it all their life long, that the essence of their vocation is not to teach, or to preach, or to write, or even to sing the praises of God in choir (as Suarez thought), but to seek God. And what could be so romantic and so full of spiritual adventure as the quest of God! It conjures up the idea, at least to English readers, of epic endeavour and victory in superhuman contests, and the ultimate possession and enjoyment of the prize. The Benedictine way is essentially to seek God, and the path that leads to him is roughly mapped out in the Rule. The Benedictine is to go to God, through Christ, inspired by the liturgy, chastened by prudent asceticism, and with great joy

and love he is to 'run in the way of God's commandments'. Those are the great sign-posts of the Benedictine way. It is notably christocentric, leading not by abstract mysticism to any clouds of unknowing, but straight through the love of Jesus Christ into the very bosom of the Blessed Trinity. Benedictine spirituality is also characteristically guided and inspired by the liturgy, and one can have no better guide and inspiration, for the liturgy is the prayer of mother Church inspired by the Holy Ghost, and no one can teach a child to pray better than a mother inspired by God.

We are grateful to Fr Matthew Dillon for making this work of Dom Ryelandt's known to English readers.

D.A.L.

BASIC SPIRITUAL MEANS. By Philip E. Dion, C.M. (Herder; 32s.)

This book is addressed especially to novices in religion, but is intended for all who are either beginners in the spiritual life or who have found, after some years, that they are making little progress in eradicating vices and acquiring virtues. Fr Dion, an experienced conductor of retreats, shows that lack of progress is often due to want of sufficiently powerful motives, and that these can be developed by mental prayer. The method given for meditations, that of St Vincent de Paul, is simple and may be particularly helpful to those who find the customary 'methods' too complicated. The author then goes on to treat of certain basic virtues, such as obedience and humility, and how to acquire them. The chapters here on abandonment and weekly confession are especially good, while the author's transatlantic style may come refreshingly to young novices who find, as is so often the case, that the best spiritual writers can be somewhat turgid. But while this book is helpful as far as it goes, it is rather limited in approach. The spiritual life, after all, is more than a carefully planned campaign for dealing with vices and virtues. It is a growth in the love of God and union with his Son, and if we truly seek this, the virtues will surely be added to us. Mental prayer, too, is far more important considered as a union with God than as a means to stirring us up to the practice of virtue. The author's continual stress on the will of God is admirable, but it is a pity that he waits until almost the end of the book before similarly stressing that 'without me you can do nothing', and that God sometimes leaves us with our weaknesses until we learn to rely on his strength and not on our own. Those reading the first chapters might be discouraged for lack of this reminder.

D.A.C.-B.

EARLY CHURCH PORTRAIT GALLERY. By Maisie Ward. (Sheed and Ward; 25s.)

'This book is not a Church history, but a handful of portraits to illuminate it.' So Miss Ward describes her latest contribution to Catholic scholarship. Her aim is to bring to life the early history of the Church by bringing to life some of the people who made it. Starting with St Ignatius and St Polycarp, who established and witnessed to the idea of martyrdom in the first Christian century, she covers the highly dramatic period of the later Roman Empire in the careers of men such as Clement, Origen, Anthony, Athanasius, Basil, John Chrysostom, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Patrick and Pope Leo the Great. There is an epilogue dealing with the sixth century in which, through the inspiration of St Benedict and St Gregory the Great, cenobitic monasticism and the papacy replaced imperial institutions as the stabilizing and unifying forces of the west in the early middle ages. Thus there is a lot of history in this book, and in an age inclined to rather narrow specialization in the historical field, one cannot but be impressed by its scope, and by the penetration and vigour of the author in assimilating the details and weaving them into a meaningful whole. Miss Ward writes with ease and a sense of being at home with her subject. She is clearly acquainted with the most important contributions of recent scholarship, and at the same time she reminds us of Newman's fruitful studies in this period with a number of apt and refreshing quotations.

'It is more realistic, as well as more encouraging, to discover the real humanity of the saints.' This is Miss Ward's starting-point, and on the whole she succeeds in her discovery. Even in the very early period, where the biographical detail is thin, she manages to convey the impact of personality at least in outline. If the character of St Athanasius is somewhat obscured by the confusing background of his life, and if we are again left with the feeling that there was something very significant about Origen though we still cannot say precisely what, this is more than countered by the sensitive chapters on St Basil, St John Chrysostom and St Augustine. The portrait of St Jerome is very balanced: 'When he talks (at great length) of fasting he becomes a little tedious, when he abuses marriage he is intolerable'. So, too, is that of Tertullian and his excessive asceticism: 'The need to relax the tight-drawn bow of the intellect while it depends on the easily-wearied body seems never to have occurred to him'.

It might perhaps have been helpful if this book had included a chronological table of some kind to establish the background and inter-connection of events. It does contain an index and bibliography.

Parallels are often drawn between society in the declining Roman Empire and that of today. It is sufficient to emphasize here the relevance

of the struggles and teaching of the early Fathers to our present situation. Miss Ward has succeeded in giving us a most stimulating study of the character and development of the early Church through the lives of these men. In so doing she challenges us, in our passivity, to reflect that, as they were once the Church militant, so we are now.

JOYCE WHALE

MAN, THE SAINT. By J. Urteaga Loidi. (Scepter; 15s.)

Fr Urteaga is a Doctor of Law and a Doctor in Theology. He is also a spiritual director of wide experience. He wrote, *Man, the Saint*, his first book, five years ago, and it was highly praised in such eminent journals as *L'Osservatore Romano* and *Libri D'Oggi*. The original Spanish version is in its seventh edition.

Man, the Saint is no ordinary book. It was not written for theologians or moralists, but for the man in the street. Though it bristles with sound doctrine, it is a cry from the heart, an appeal to the 'restless and the rebels, to those who are dissatisfied with their own lives and the lives of others'. The author admits that his pages are written in 'spasmodic outbursts, without any attempt at style or rhetoric, without any external or formal unity'. But a unifying principle is there throughout. It is the concept of holiness. 'What I want to do is to help you to see and understand the enormous importance of the human factor in the Christian and in the saint. So we will speak . . . of what every man has in him, and what he must sanctify.' For nowadays, when everything is examined and criticized, supernatural virtues must be grounded more than ever before on genuine natural virtues, practised supernaturally.

'The Whip', 'You too can be a soldier', 'Into the deep', 'An age on fire', are some of the provocative titles in the page of contents. And every section, based on an appropriate text, is crammed with salutary comment, keen observation, and practical application. Nor is the author afraid to be caustic or uncomfortably personal. Every weapon in his armoury must be used to force home a point.

Man, the Saint is a book to be taken in small doses. As a last-thing-at-night book, it could serve as an acute examination of conscience. But not every soul will be able to appreciate the author's downright, often kaleidoscopic, approach to things as they are. He has no use at all for smugness or pietism. He might be described as the iconoclast of sham spirituality.

Fr Urteaga's name has been linked with those of Péguy, Blois, and Papini, presumably because he has had the courage to emphasize the importance of every natural attribute in the plan of human perfection, and to demonstrate that religion and life were never intended to be kept in separate compartments. But his theology and profound, if often

fiery, faith are a sufficient guarantee against any suggestion of mere humanism or literary dilettantism.

On the whole the English translation reads well enough, though in places the staccato style is oppressive, though probably inevitable. And surely the long and unsightly litany of references could have been avoided.

E.E.

SAID OR SUNG: An Arrangement of Homily and Verse. By Austin Farrer. (The Faith Press; 16s.)

Dr Farrer is a Fellow and the Chaplain of Trinity College, Oxford. He lectures in the university in divinity and philosophy, and has written, in a style generally admired, several books on philosophy and scripture. The latter are often said to be 'out of the main stream', which seems to mean that he spares the footnotes (acknowledged on the cover of this book) and uses the space to raise some very pertinent and acute questions on the Bible, and supply the sort of solutions which, we suspect, tend to be outside the range of the general traffic in the main stream, for the present at any rate.

Anglican biblical scholars have never strayed far from the Catholic view that the scriptures are a unity, both in themselves and as a centre from which theology and the life of the individual Christian must grow. While some of their attempts have sometimes appeared a bit artificial, with Dr Farrer the fissure never appears. His studies in the gospels are a Christian's exploration into the inspired minds of the evangelists: his biblical theology is the way in: it is his sympathy with that mind, not, as with some, an attempt to tidy up the loose ends of a purely scientific scholarship. This integrity is one of the exciting things about this book. Here is a devout Christian peering into the mysteries of scripture and preaching about what he sees to his congregation. We want to call it good scientific exegesis, and we want to say it is spiritual guidance of a high order, and we want to say that both are one and the same thing for him. And we marvel at this, for so many of us find it hard to make our meditations and our studies in scripture one.

The book cover holds out these sermons as an example to preachers. We all, preachers and congregations alike, are agreed that many sermons are ugly artificial things that stick out of the liturgy like a sore thumb. Dr Farrer has already suggested (in *The Crown of the Year*) that for early masses on Sunday the priest might compose a paragraph, out of clear thinking and a little charm, to be read out as a sermon to last no more than a minute and a half. I think this preacher must always write his sermons out. A previous chaplain of Trinity—the late Mgr Knox—would have approved of his method and certainly his style.

Does the read sermon lose in sincerity? Not in these sermons. Dr Farrer would have the preacher so puzzle and pray about the word that he is preaching that it becomes quite part of himself. It is the sympathy of this preacher that makes these sermons such a delight. He is so involved in the gospel, its imagery and rhythms are so much his own. He has such a tender gracious sympathy for his flock—he seems to worry their problems with them. C.B.

NOTICES

CHRISTIANITY IN CONFLICT, by John A. Hardon, S.J. (Newman Press, Maryland; pp. xiii + 300; \$4.50), is described by the author as an evaluation of Protestant faith and practice from an ecumenical rather than a polemical point of view. Perhaps it is inevitable that an 'evaluation' should emphasize the ways in which Protestant beliefs and practices differ from those of the Catholic Church, but the book is carefully documented (mainly from American Protestant sources) and written in a charitable spirit.

CREDO, by Peter Lippert, S.J. (tome 2, Cerf; pp. 314; 9.90 NF), is an adaptation from the German, published in the *Foi vivante* series. Father Lippert's aim is to present *une théologie du coeur*; that is, he shows how man's deepest needs are met, not by 'the faith' (as a system of doctrines), but by personal contact with the living God. There are three main sections: *le Sauveur, les grâces de Dieu, les sacrements du Christ*. The first volume (*Dieu, la Trinité, la création*) appeared a few years ago in the same series and is still available (8.10 NF).

DEVOTIONS FOR HOLY COMMUNION, revised and rearranged by Hubert McEvoy, S.J. (Burns and Oates; pp. 334; 15s.). These prayers and readings are drawn from the best of sources (the psalms, ancient liturgies, the Fathers, and a few modern writers), and the book is beautifully printed and bound. But some of the translations might have been revised more thoroughly, so as to eliminate phrases like *thou thyself hast vouchsafed*.

The Paulist Press (New York) is publishing a *Pamphlet Bible Series*, in monthly numbers. The third in the series is *Genesis*, part 2, with a commentary by Ignatius Hunt, O.S.B. (pp. 96, 76 c.); and the fourth is *Exodus*, part 1, commented by Roland Murphy, O.CARM. The text is that of the Confraternity version, printed clearly and spaciouly in paragraphs, with sub-headings. The twenty-page commentary is up-to-date, helpful, and written in simple language. There is also a useful sketch-map and an ingenious 'self-teaching quiz'. This series should help many more people to read the Bible with understanding. We hope later to print a more extended review of the first two productions of the series.